

## Certificate Program in Evaluation

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Management Systems International (MSI) offers an intensive course in project and program evaluation that is aimed at building the basic skills and knowledge needed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local government officials, and foreign assistance program managers whose responsibilities include the monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the activities and projects they finance. Practical experience provided by the course also makes it ideal for individuals seeking to establish themselves as independent, professional program evaluators.

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

MSI's *Certificate Program in Evaluation* is an intensive training and practical application course that is equivalent, in hours and coverage, to a one-semester course at the graduate level at a U.S. university. The course is designed for professionals outside the United States who wish to develop their skills in program and project evaluation without being absent from their normal work for an extensive period. This professional development course has three phases. Class size normally ranges from 18, on the low side, to 30 people, on the high side.

Phase I of the course involves an intensive week of classroom training that includes preparation, by teams of participants, of a scope of work and plan for their practical field evaluation exercise. Topics covered in Phase I of the course include:

- Evaluation: The Evolution of a Concept
- Developing an Evaluation Scope of Work
- Establishing the Evaluation Questions
- Values and Ethics in Evaluation
- Managing Evaluations
- Evaluation Design
- The Data Collection Toolkit
- Data Analysis and Interpretation
- Evaluation Reports, Presentations and their Utilization

During Phase II, participants, working in small teams, carry out an evaluation of a small project that has recently been completed. Projects evaluated by participant teams may have been implemented by a non-governmental organization (NGO), a local government agency, or another type of organization. Generally, participant teams spend one week on-site evaluating a project. Each team is free to schedule its fieldwork for any period of time between Phase I and Phase II that is convenient for all members of a that team. Team members communicate by e-mail as they prepare for their fieldwork experience. They also use e-mail to work together to produce an evaluation report.

Phase III brings participants back together in a classroom setting to review and critique the evaluations carried out by the class and for additional lectures and substantive discussions. Participants have a hand in defining the curriculum for Phase III of the course. New modules on *Cost Effectiveness Analysis in Evaluation* (2002) and *Analysis in Mixed Method Evaluations* (2004) are among the options available for Phase III.

In total, participants in the *Certificate Program in Evaluation* spend approximately three weeks out of their offices over a ten-twelve week period, as suggested by the figure on the following page. When the course is given in a language other than English, team evaluation reports are due two weeks before Phase III begins in order to provide time for their translation.

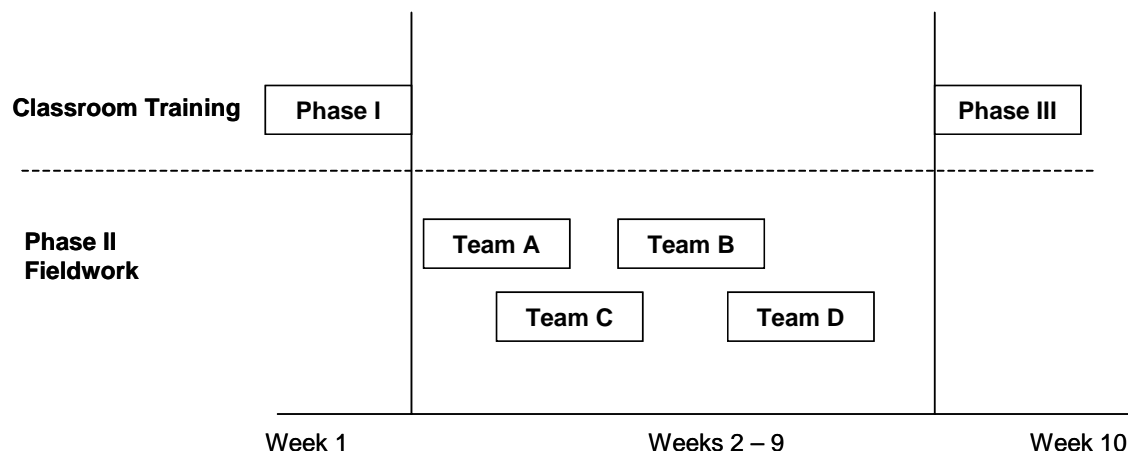
Certificates are awarded to participants who complete all three phases of the course.

The MSI *Certificate Program in Evaluation* has been presented for USAID-funded non-governmental organizations (NGOs) twice in Russia (1997 and 2000), once in Malawi (2000) and three times in Armenia (2002 & 2003). The course has also been given for USAID staff in Eastern Europe/Central Asia (2003) and in three courses presented in East, Southern and West Africa (2004). Additional classes are scheduled for 2005.

Modules from the Certificate Program course have also been used in training programs MSI provided

to the International Labor Organization, the U.S. Department of Labor and the World Bank.

The *Certificate Program in Evaluation* is designed to link seamlessly with project and program design approaches that focus on “cause and effect” linkages, e.g., the Logical Framework, as well as with performance measurement systems that encourage monitoring at the “results” level of programs and projects and are compatible with such national legislation as the U.S. Government Performance and Results Act of 1993.



A follow-up survey of the first group of Certificate Program graduates in Russia, undertaken in the fall of 2000, and more recent interviews with these graduates (2002) indicate that most are using their evaluation skills to set up evaluation systems in their organizations or to conduct project or program evaluations for organizations in their region, including evaluations financed by USAID, the World Bank and Eurasia Foundation. All of the respondents to the survey indicated that they had participated in at least one evaluation since

completing the course, and a number of respondents had been involved in several evaluation studies. In addition, some course graduates are teaching evaluation to others in their sectors or communities. Russian course graduates have also played a leading role in the creation of a new regional evaluation network serving Russia and over a dozen other newly independent states in that region. Follow-up assessments for other courses are planned for 2005.

### Management Systems International

Management Systems International, Inc. (MSI) was founded in 1981 with a corporate commitment to improving public sector governance and management and fostering entrepreneurship in the United States and abroad. Since its establishment, MSI has performed more than 1500 consultancies, including technical assistance and training services in more than 100 countries around the world. For more information, contact:

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